

Press Release

Start Somewhere builds the world's first massive school building in Kibera with the newly developed hollow concrete blocks: Start of the first construction phase

- "From Kibera for Kibera": In the hollow concrete block factory operated by Start Somewhere, local employees produce the hollow concrete blocks for the school building on site.
- Two-story school building "block on block" with space for 400 children
- Long-term goal: Creating better living conditions in disadvantaged communities around the world

KIBERA, May 28, 2020 - The first step has been taken: Project manager Lazarus Asewe and construction manager Samwel Nyolo laid the foundation for a massive school building in Nairobi's Kibera slum last week. The construction is the first of its kind based on a new kind of building system specially developed for informal settlements by the Munich-based social startup Start Somewhere. All of the nearly 30 workers involved in the construction are from Kibera. After being trained by Start Somewhere, the employees are currently casting the required blocks in the hollow concrete block factory that went into operation last fall, while others are constructing the building. Only the team of three Start Somewhere team members comes from Germany. Part of the team is Oliver von Malm, inventor of the building system and architect. Due to the Corona crisis, he is not leading the first construction phase on site as planned, but by means of digital communication from Munich.

The construction system

The building system for informal settlements, which Oliver von Malm initially developed in 2016 as part of his master's thesis in architecture, was to be flexible in layout, demountable, affordable and safe. The system has since been patented and certified by the Kenyan Bureau of Standards.

The construction and operation of the factory as well as the school building are being supported as part of a pilot project by Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH (DEG), a subsidiary of KfW Bank, and by PERI, one of the largest manufacturers and suppliers of formwork and scaffolding systems. are placed on top of the building. A suspended plasterboard ceiling between the roof and the classrooms ensures that the heat radiation does not reach the interior of the building. This is to achieve a comfortable room temperature for the students and teachers in relation to the outside temperature. The indoor climate also benefits from the "thermal mass" of the walls, which is provided by the material and the thickness of the hollow concrete blocks.

The school in Kibera

Once completed, the new school building offers space for up to 400 children thanks to two floors, instead of just the previous 250. The workers used a total of 7,000 hollow concrete blocks for this purpose. 75 blocks are produced daily by the factory. The new school offers teachers and students a total of twelve classrooms, two staff rooms, various toilets and a library on a gross floor area of 460 square meters. Each classroom accommodates up to 33 children from preschool to eighth grade.

The construction process

Construction will take place over two phases. In the first construction phase, which has just started, the construction team will raise the lower floor in six to eight weeks. The construction of the upper floor will start in a second construction phase in August and will require the same amount of time.

Corona crisis: Supervision not on site, but from Munich

Initially, the architect Oliver von Malm planned the coordination of the project on site in Kibera. Due to the entry restriction, the entire construction was on the back burner in the meantime. "Since we have already been able to familiarise the local staff with workshops and smaller test buildings, and good digital communication with the local teams is ensured, we are now starting the construction without our personal on-site support - a real endurance test that will show that value creation 'from Kibera for Kibera' is possible after only a short preparation period without external help," says von Malm.

Building a school in Kibera as a starting project.

Creating value in self-sufficient economic micro-units in slums is a central goal of Start Somewhere in the medium term. This will create jobs and a self-sustaining and gradually growing sector of the economy. The strong involvement of the local population as a guiding principle enables scaling up to informal housing settlements worldwide. Private and institutional requests for further buildings with the Start Somewhere construction system have already been received - both within Kibera and internationally.

About Start Somewhere

Start Somewhere gemeinnützige GmbH is a social start-up based in Munich with eight years of experience in development cooperation in one of the largest slums in Africa: Kibera, Nairobi (Kenya). The vision of Start Somewhere is the sustainable improvement of living conditions in the slums of this world. Concretely, *Start Somewhere* develops a flexible, reusable, cost-effective and fireproof construction

system for buildings in slums. The resulting hollow concrete blocks can be assembled and disassembled by hand as a modular, mortarless plug-in system. For the first time, any angle can also be realised steplessly in the floor plan.

In this way, the first school building is to be constructed as a pilot project in Kibera by 2020. Start Somewhere wants to enable the slum dwellers to produce the hollow concrete blocks themselves in a workshop on site and thus erect better buildings in the slum. Jobs and a local construction industry are created so that the added value remains in the slum.

As a non-profit organization, *Start Somewhere* supports two schools in the Kibera slum with currently more than 800 children through donations. This includes two daily meals at school, medical care and school equipment.

The PERI Company

With a turnover of € 1,560 million in 2018, PERI is one of the largest manufacturers and suppliers of formwork and scaffolding systems. With around 9,500 employees, 70 subsidiaries and well over 160 warehouse locations, PERI serves its customers worldwide with innovative system equipment and comprehensive services for all aspects of formwork and scaffolding technology.

Note to the editors:

We are happy to provide you with pictures. Please contact our media contact.

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